

### REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in light of the above amendment and the following remarks.

Independent claim 1 and claims 5, 6, 11 and 12 dependent therefrom are pending.

The previous rejections based on Ito et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,124,057) have been withdrawn in the present office action.

Claims 1, 11 and 12 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over EP 0853347. Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 USC §103 (a) as allegedly being unpatentable over EP '347 in view of Iwata et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,168,888), and claim 6 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over EP '347 in view of Wang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,532,084). To the extent that these rejections may be deemed applicable to the amended claims, the Applicants respectfully traverse.

The Office Action asserts that EP 0853347 teaches that the negative electrode can contain an active material comprising strontium carbonate.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the negative electrode contains "at least one compound selected from the group consisting of NaOH, NaNH<sub>2</sub>, NaN<sub>3</sub>, NaHC<sub>2</sub>, KOH, KN<sub>3</sub>, KNH<sub>2</sub>, KHC<sub>2</sub>, and Sr(OH)<sub>2</sub>," i.e., strontium carbonate has been deleted. As EP '347 neither teaches

nor suggests to include any of the compounds recited by now-amended claim 1, the Applicants respectfully submit that EP '347 fails to teach or suggest each feature recited by now-amended claim 1.

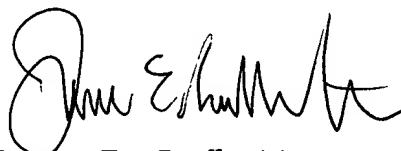
Neither Iwata et al. nor Wang et al., applied against claims 5 and 6 respectively, cures the deficiency of EP '347.

Accordingly, claim 1, and claims 5, 6, 11 and 12 dependent therefrom, are allowable over the individual or combined teachings of the applied art.

In view of the above, the Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

If any issues remain which may best be resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: April 13, 2006  
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